

Dawn Chabot HB 5558

Dear Legislatures;

My name is Dawn Chabot, my 55 year old sister-in-law Rebecca, is the reason for me writing and asking for your help. Becky came to live with my family eight years ago when my mother-in-law's health began to fail.

I took guardianship and began the process of searching out any help I could find for her. The medical issues were first and took persistence and patience as Becky had not been properly socialized for over 30 years. She was very frightened and combative and it literally took years for her to become tolerant and receptive to medical treatment. The next step was socialization; she was placed in a day program run by Seabird early on and remains in this program to this day. This was a god send for her, as she had very limited social interaction up to this point and quite literally had to learn to act within a group outside of her family unit for the first time since school. As Becky began to blossom in her new world I began to see that she needed more, our family was changing as well with my children leaving home which put much more pressure on myself and my husband to provide full time support to Becky outside of her day program.

Becky has been on a "wait list" since the first meeting I had with DDS. I knew at the time she came to live with us that she was not ready to be placed, with poor health and poor social skills I knew that, as her family we could ready her for a life of her own. We have finally reached this point and placements are few and far between. Honestly we are in the process of checking out a CCH home which would be a perfect match for Becky.

We had received a grant for in home supports just recently and Becky is serviced by the ARC for 13 hour per week. This has been just enough to relieve some of the pressure especially on my husband as he works 1st shift and I work 2nd shift, leaving him in charge of Becky's care in the evenings. The last four years without the additional support of our children has been challenging. My husband is in a profession that at times extra hours must be worked, sometimes at a moment's notice; I have had to shuffle Becky here and there because she is incapable of being left alone. This causes disruption for her and a great deal of stress for me and my husband. These in home supports have been wonderful but they are not an adequate substitute for permanent residential placement.

Please help Becky and us realize the dream of independent living. You need to realize that while the grants are a great thing they are a mere band aid. Solutions for the advancement of the ID/DD community need to be found. I quite frankly have no idea what they may be but ignoring this issue will only allow it to grow into a massive problem in the future. Progressive thinking is required.

Thank you for your time,

Dawn Chabot